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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/24/2024

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SUBJECT: AIT CHAIRMAN BURGHARDT'S NOVEMBER 24 MEETINGS WITH
PRESIDENT MA AND NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR SU CHI

Classified By: AIT Director Bill Stanton for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary: AIT Chairman Ray Burghardt met with Ma Ying-jeou and National Security Council Secretary General Su Chi on November 24 to brief them on President Obama's recently-concluded trip to Asia and to discuss prospects for U.S.-Taiwan relations. Because of improvements in U.S.-Taiwan ties, Ma said, this was the first time Taipei did not have to worry about what would happen when an American President traveled to China. Ma emphasized Taiwan's appreciation for how quickly Burghardt had come to provide a read-out of the trip. In a separate meeting, Su Chi thanked Burghardt for his willingness to clarify statements by President Obama that had been misinterpreted by the Taiwan media and stressed the need to take concrete action on bilateral issues. Burghardt expressed disappointment with Taiwan's handling of the re-opening of its beef market. End Summary.

Su: "Action, Action, Action" Needed on U.S. Ties

12. (C) AIT Chairman Ray Burghardt held back-to-back one-hour meetings with Taiwan NSC Secretary General Su Chi and President Ma on November 24, providing a read-out of President Obama's trip to Asia and discussing prospects for U.S.-Taiwan relations. Burghardt began his meeting with Su by noting that he had met with key NSC and State Department officials involved in the POTUS trip immediately before traveling to Taiwan and had been authorized to clarify a number of misperceptions about the visit to China that had gained currency in the local media.

13. (C) Most fundamentally, Burghardt said, neither President Obama nor his advisers said anything, either publicly or

privately with their PRC interlocutors, to change U.S. policy on arms sales to Taiwan or Taiwan's sovereignty. On the latter, the Shanghai communique remained the definitive statement of U.S. policy, despite repeated PRC attempts over the years to get the United States to be more specific. Likewise, Burghardt said, he had been authorized to repeat longstanding (but not recently restated) U.S. support for resolving cross-Straits issues through direct, peaceful dialogue. The pace and content of these discussions, he emphasized, was entirely up to the two sides. Su expressed appreciation for Burghardt's efforts and for American support for Taiwan's interests. While there was some media and public concern about the implications of President Obama's first trip to Beijing, Su said, Burghardt's planned public statements would go a long way toward easing them.

¶4. (C) Words were important, Su emphatically added, but now was the time to take concrete action to demonstrate that U.S.-Taiwan ties remained strong. This was particularly true given the political damage President Ma had suffered from his determination to stand by the recently announced agreement to re-open Taiwan's market to U.S. beef products. Ma needed to demonstrate that his policy of reducing tensions with China and restoring trust with the United States would benefit Taiwan. Burghardt replied that the United States knew Ma's priorities -- including arms sales, consideration of admission into the visa waiver program, negotiation of an extradition agreement and other issues -- and was actively considering whether or how to proceed.

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Beef Blowback "Disappointing"

¶5. (C) Many in Washington were disappointed over Taiwan's reaction to the decision to re-open its market to U.S. beef and beef products based on the agreed protocol, Burghardt said. Although opposition from the DPP party was perhaps inevitable, given Taiwan's highly-politicized environment, the reactions of KMT legislators, local officials and even senior government officials like the Health Minister who were directly involved in the issue were very unhelpful, Burghardt stressed.

¶6. (C) The KMT's handling of the issue in the week following the announcement of the protocol was disorganized, Su admitted. Since then, however, President Ma had become actively involved in managing the issue. Unfortunately, even though Ma was Chairman of the KMT, he was not able to enforce discipline on all members of the party. For example, Su said, Legislative Yuan Speaker Wang Jin-pyng was, for his own political reasons, not playing a constructive role, introducing legislative proposals that echoed DPP views and confusing the issue. Likewise, Taipei Mayor Hau Long-bin and other KMT politicians who once belonged to the New Party or People First Party tended to be less inclined to help Ma. Nevertheless, it was increasingly clear that the administration would meet its commitments under the protocol, the OIE and the WTO, Su assured Burghardt.

Press Remarks on Obama Trip, Beef and Arms

¶7. (U) With media in the room, President Ma Ying-jeou began his November 24 meeting with AIT Chairman Burghardt by expressing thanks for the speed with which he had come to Taipei following President Obama's visit to China. People had noted President Obama's comments about the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and wording in the joint statement on Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity, Ma said, and were looking forward to the Chairman's comments on those subjects. Although some people still had concerns about the decision to increase market access for U.S. beef products, Ma noted, his administration stood behind the protocol as negotiated and had put in place safeguards to ensure that all

imported products were safe. Finally, Ma said, he hoped the United States would take action on Taiwan's pending requests to acquire F-16 C/Ds to replace its aging fleet of F-5s, to join the U.S. visa waiver program, to negotiate an extradition agreement and to re-engage in building the bilateral trade and economic relationship within the context of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

¶18. (U) Burghardt emphasized that, both publicly and in his private meetings with Chinese leaders, President Obama had reaffirmed longstanding U.S. policies on Taiwan, including our commitment to supply Taiwan with weapons to meet its self-defense needs. Moreover, President Obama's statements, including the joint statement issued at the conclusion of his trip, represented no change in the U.S. position on Taiwan's political status. Simply put, Burghardt said, "we do not take a position on this." He noted that he had been instructed to reaffirm publicly the U.S. commitment to the TRA, which he called the "central document on relations between the people of the United States and Taiwan." The AIT Chairman also made clear that the United States had long urged that the cross-Straits issue be resolved peacefully,

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without coercion and in accordance with the wishes of people on both sides of the Straits.

Ma: First Worry-Free POTUS China Trip

¶19. (C) As the media left the room, Ma thanked Burghardt for his comments which, the President said, would help to ease concerns about Obama's visit. Ordinary people were naturally worried whenever a U.S. President visited China, Ma said, and the DPP wanted to use the trip to bolster its accusations that his efforts at rapprochement with the PRC were alienating the United States. Nevertheless, the President commented, his government had felt very comfortable with the trip. Indeed, he said, because trust had been restored in the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, this was the first "worry-free" such visit for a Taiwan President.

¶10. (S) Taiwan had not been a major topic of discussion during the President's visit, Burghardt stressed. Most notably, Hu Jintao had urged President Obama not to "upgrade" U.S. Taiwan relations and cautioned the President not to sell Taiwan "sophisticated" weapon systems. Likewise, in a meeting with the Secretary, State Councillor Dai Bingguo cautioned that it would set back U.S.-China relations if the United States "took steps" with regard to Taiwan. Apart from these brief mentions, Burghardt said, most of the President's meetings focused on global and regional issues, including Iran, North Korea and South Asia. The focus of Chinese discussions of sovereignty issues was Tibet and Xinjiang, Burghardt made clear.

F-16s a "Litmus Test"

¶11. (C) Senior U.S. officials were looking at the remaining items from the 2001 package of weapons systems, Burghardt said, to see whether a decision could be made in the near future. Ultimately, however, the decision would be made at the very highest levels of the U.S. government, he emphasized. Arms sales -- and F-16 C/Ds in particular -- were important militarily but were also a "litmus test" of the U.S. relationship, Ma said.

¶12. (C) On beef, Ma emphasized that his administration had met its commitments under the recently-signed protocol and would continue to work to see it implemented as agreed. That said, the issue had become politicized, something that would be hard to undo. Ma noted that, despite his role as KMT Chairman, it was difficult to enforce discipline on fractious party members. Burghardt noted the high level of attention the issue had received in Washington, and emphasized the

importance of Taiwan abiding by its commitments. He noted that the United States had long been a strong ally in Taiwan's efforts to gain access to international organizations. What was the point of getting access to institutions like the OIE (Organization for Animal Health) if you did not then abide by its standards, he asked.

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